175 in both countries. An important feature in the
565 social structure of Sweden-Finland was the free position of the farming class. The peasants never became serfs as they did in Central Europe, but were able to keep their landed property and their political rights in spite of the rising influence of the nobility in subsequent centuries. When the diet was established in 1435, the peasants were from the very first represented in it as one of the four estates. The name peasant, in Finnish talonpoika ('the son of the house,' i.e. the owner of the farm), like the Swedish equivalent bonde, is regarded as an honorary designation of which the owner is very proud.

177 Cultural influences usually reached Finland via Sweden, but the Finns were also in direct

175 Inkeri, the district around present-day Leningrad. Up to that time the country had been rather loosely connected with Sweden and ruled by Finnish-born officials; now a stronger central administrative system was established, and Finland was ruled directly from Stockholm. Great economic and cultural progress was achieved, especially under the governor-gen-
[873] eral, Count Pehr Brahe, who founded the University of Turku--today the University of Helsinki--in 1640, and remained long in the memory of the people as the personification of a bygone golden age, of "the time of the Count." But the new administrative system brought a danger of denationalization to the Finns. Up
191 until that time Finnish had been the common
● 565 language of the gentry as well as of the

[Up to the 17th century--Analyst]

191 565 peasants. but now it became fashionable to speak Swedish instead and to pass as a Swede in the eyes of the outside world. The educated classes rejected their old Finnish family names in favor of distorted Latinized versions or strictly Swedish names. At the same time Swedish, instead of Latin, became the language of education in the schools. Thus the educated classes began more and more to forget their native tongue, the officials no longer spoke Finnish, and the language was used only in religious literature. It was said that "only with his God a Finn could speak Finnish any more," for divine services still were conducted in the native tongue of the people.

175 Sweden-Finland was not able to remain a great power for long. The last decade of the

191 with the help of its special political position it
162 tries to resist any Finnish expansion. The islands southwest of the city of Turku are generally Swedish-speaking, while those to the northwest are Finnish-speaking. Along the Gulf of Finland the Swedish-speaking area extends from south of Turku in the west almost to Kotka in the east, and along the Gulf of Bothnia south of Kristiina to Kokkola in the north. The major cities--in this area Helsinki, Turku and Vaasa--are all predominantly Finnish-speaking.

The Swedish-speaking minority is still an important factor in public life, although its
• [565] value is generally exaggerated abroad. There are still proportionally more Swedish than Finnish-speaking people among the well-to-do classes, and the control of most of the

Annex "A," Subparagraph 1f,

Sociological Background

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

565 No clear-cut class system exists in Finland at the present time. There is even little basis historically for ascribing to the Finns any kind of caste system, as practically the entire population has its roots in common peasant stock. In the early Middle Ages certain peasants undertook to serve the kings as cavalrymen in the army, and as compensation they were exempted from taxes. This was the origin of the nobility in Sweden-Finland, the privileged class later being reiforced by foreign nobelmen who entered into service for the Swedish kings. In the early seventeenth century the nobility was a powerful factor in the State, by then enjoying hereditary rights and in control of a

● 565 vast wealth from landed property. But towards the end of the century a drastic reduction of the big estates paralyzed the power of the nobility for good and strengthened the position of the [554] king and the peasant population. The few noble families in Finland have long ago lost their importance and prestige, now birth alone does not have any significance in the position of the individual in the society.

[191] Another and much deeper-rooted differentiation has been caused by the predominance in Finland of the Swedish language. Until a century ago all the educated classes in the country were Swedish-speaking and were looked upon by the people half reverently, half scornfully, as "gentlefolks." This attitude still exists to some extent, although it is hard to define specifically.